

Fenton
book
✓



POLLOCK, M. R

JAN 15 1973

DEPARTMENT OF MOLECULAR BIOLOGY
KING'S BUILDINGS
MAYFIELD ROAD
EDINBURGH
EH9 3JR

Telephone 031-667 1011

Ext. 3282

Ext. 3290

Professor W. Hayes, M.B., F.R.S.

Professor M. R. Pollock, M.B., F.R.S.

8th January, 1973.

Professor J. Lederberg,
Department of Genetics,
Stanford University,
Stanford,
Calif. 94305.

Dear Josh,

Many thanks for your note of December 26 and for all the interesting odds and ends of correspondence you kindly sent with it. I am glad the problem about the Avery Griffith meeting seems now to have been pretty clearly settled.

I would be very interested to know how and in what form all your recent researches into this problem materialise. As I mentioned previously I am concentrating more on the period 1860-1900 which I find most intriguing.

My guess is that biologists did in general think that DNA was important; but certainly not necessarily others such as organic chemists. I remember having quite a violent argument with a distinguished organic chemist in 1946 when I pointed out that I saw no reason in principle why DNA should not contain as much specificity as proteins. Did not quite a number of scientists consider its role was primarily structural and supporting in those early days - or at least providing a mechanism for duplication, without necessarily bearing the necessary specificity for transmission of heritable characters? (I am avoiding the use of the word "information" since I think I am right in supposing this came very much later: was it not as a result of a letter you and others wrote to Nature some time in the '50's?)

With kind regards,

Yours ever,

Marlin